



Department of Health and Human Services

Office of the Commissioner

Policy and Procedure Statement

Policy # DHHS-16-05

Issue Date: 10/31/05
Revised Date:

I. SUBJECT

Ergonomics and VDT Policy for Department of Health and Human Services Staff

II. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to take proactive steps to prevent injuries and illnesses resulting from computer use and other repetitive motion tasks. Ergonomic disorders commonly referred to as work related muscular-skeletal disorders, repetitive motion injuries, repetitive strain injuries, or cumulative trauma disorders are a leading causing of injury and illness for Departmental employees and State employees as a whole. Implementation of ergonomic practices will reduce the risks associated with work related muscular-skeletal disorders.

III. RATIONALE

The goal of the Department is to prevent workplace illnesses and injuries caused by computer related activities and repetitive motion tasks. This policy applies to employees who work with computers, at a computer workstation, with related office equipment and at other jobs involving repetitive motion tasks. Department managers, supervisors and employees shall support this policy and take positive measures to the ergonomic practices outlined in this policy to meet the needs of each individual workgroup.

IV. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Ergonomics Coordinator: The Health and Safety Coordinator will ensure appropriate staff in each building receive training and necessary refresher training to conduct workstation evaluations. These staff members will be referred to as Peer Work Station Evaluators. The Ergonomics Coordinator will work with the Workers' Compensation Division Disability Prevention Program to ensure reviews and recommendations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Ergonomic Evaluators: A team of ergonomic evaluators will be identified for each work site/building throughout the Department. Peer Work Station Evaluators will be trained by the Worker's Compensation Division Disability Prevention Program. Each Peer Evaluator will be assigned workstation evaluations in conjunction with the Workers' Compensation Division Disability Prevention Program and the Departmental Ergonomics Coordinator based upon requests made through supervisory channels, Human Resources staff, or employees. Updates will be presented periodically to the Departmental Health, Safety, and Wellness Committee as well as Local Safety and Health Committees.

Ergonomic Evaluations: Employee who work with computers, at a computer workstation or at other workstations where they are involved in repetitive motion tasks will have their work area or workstation evaluated or assessed to determine that it fits the ergonomic needs of the worker.

Employees new to the department will have their work area or workstation evaluated and, if necessary, modified within the first sixty (60) days of their employment with the Department. The same will be done for employees who transfer or move to another office area within the Department. Once the evaluation is completed and approved by the designated Occupational Health Provider, **the immediate supervisor will be responsible** for addressing the recommendations and modifications contained within the evaluation and are carried out in a timely manner.

A professional workstation evaluation will be conducted when an employee has a history of specific medical problems or work related injury. A network of providers who do these professional evaluations will be made available through the Human Resources Division.

Ergonomics/VDT Training: Current employees will receive training on an annual basis. New employees shall receive this training within three months of employment during new employee orientation. The training will consist of Maine law Title 26 Section 251; education on the proper use of computers and measures employees may take to prevent work related muscular-skeletal disorders; recognition of signs and symptoms of ergonomic injuries or illness that may result from using ergonomically incorrect workstations; reporting procedure; information regarding proper posture and adjustability of workstation equipment.

V. DISTRIBUTION

All employees, via email and hard-copy postings on designated bulletin boards.

10/31/05

Effective Date

John R. Nicholas
Commissioner